

recommendation and to educate Aboriginal children about health promotion and prevention.

Similarly, this Committee has recently heard apprehensions about the decentralization of health and social services for Aboriginal people with disabilities. Ian Hinksman, Director of the B.C. Aboriginal Network on Disability Society, told us that:

*I somehow feel that giving it to them [the band leadership] is like the government trying to give it out. It seems to disappear somewhere in that process... Some bands would make good use of it; I'm afraid others would do something that really doesn't have too much to do with the disabled people.*

*Minutes*, Issue 19, pp.81-82, 22 April 1992

In light of these cautionary statements, this Committee hopes that the transfer of health and social services to First Nations' communities does not serve as an excuse for inaction either by the federal government or by the band leadership. For their part, federal departments must keep in mind that effective transfers must be accompanied by adequate training, financial and technical assistance. In addition, there should be some guarantee that the community leadership will make disability issues a priority in any planning for locally delivered services.

Aboriginal people with disabilities have every right to expect the federal government to assume ultimate responsibility for their needs and concerns. Since their need for services cuts across federal/provincial boundaries, the federal government must assume leadership in removing these barriers. A comprehensive federal approach to Aboriginal disability issues should include